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ABSTRACT

Research has indicated that teachers are willing to be involved and are capable of being involved in instructional development. According to Kingham and Benham, team teaching has failed in the past due to three causes: a) no planning time, b) personality clashes, and c) inability to integrate the material. To solve these three problems, one can utilize Bixby's definition of supervision as a "pool of services to which all members of the professional team make contributions and from which all can draw as their needs demand." Two institutions, the State College Area School District in Pennsylvania and Indiana University at Bloomington, have attempted to develop the pool-of-services concept in team teaching. Both propose roughly the same objectives: a) the team agrees to work on a common goal--in State College, the team agrees to write course content; b) the team recognizes that each member must learn something about the other's technical background--in State College, this step involves teachers teaching each other during work days allocated in in-service programs; c) each member of the team must actually learn something of the other's respective disciplines--in State College, this means teaching the children what one has learned from colleagues; and d) the team must successfully complete a series of action steps, such as writing the instructional content and teaching the content for one teaching year. (JA)

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TEAM TEACHING WILL WORK!

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With non-graded, continuous-progress, open-classroom programs being the objective of many school systems, the development of teaching teams becomes a necessity. In our haste to provide an optimum physical setting, too often the very heart of the program (the faculty that will make the system go) receives the least amount of time and consideration. It is far easier to build an organized program on paper, to record pupil progress and to organize the files than to deal with the intangible problem of helping teachers share their knowledge and talents. Yet it is my opinion that none of today's innovations in program organization can succeed without vital teaching teams.

That teachers wish to be involved in the development of their teams has been documented by Root (7) who found that instructional development was of high interest to teachers, and that unless the teachers are involved, the children are unlikely to experience the results of instructional development. The fact that teachers have the expertise to develop curricula has been substantiated by Kaner (3) who describes a successful curriculum writing group in England. A spin off of the writing project was appreciation of the effort of team colleagues, less petty criticisms, and increased self-criticism. Ames(1) found that commitment to task accomplishments and peer approval are rewarding to teachers.

If teachers wish to be involved in team development, are capable of writing course content, and are rewarded by peer approval, then we must ask ourselves why team teaching has failed in the past. According to Kinghorn and Benham (4) the three major

causes of failure are 1) no planning time, 2) personality clashes, and 3) inability to integrate the material. When these problems receive high priority treatment, solutions can be found. The task of finding the solution must be shared by administrators, supervisors, and teachers.

Let us examine the role of supervision in solving the three problems of team teaching. Since the traditional definition of supervision will not work in the innovative programs, I would like to advocate a more relevant definition by Bixby (2). According to Bixby, supervision can succeed when viewed as a "pool of services to which all members of the professional team make contributions and from which all can draw as their needs demand". This idea of a pool of services, while vitalizing the team members, raises two new questions:

1. How can members of the professional team make contributions to the pool?
2. How can members of the professional team know what talents are available within the pool?

These critical questions have been successfully answered in two locations of which I am aware: the State College Area School District in Pennsylvania, where I work, and at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, as reported by Ames(1). Both projects operate in elementary schools.

The team teaching project in Indiana is based on each team experiencing the following objectives:

1. The team agrees to work on a common goal.
2. The team recognizes that each member must learn something

about the others' technical background.

3. Each member of the team must actually learn something of the others' respective disciplines.

4. The team must successfully complete a series of action steps.

Some of the elementary schools in State College, under the direction of Christopher Mare, Reading Supervisor, follow (5) a procedure which is similar to that recommended by Ames. I shall use examples from my State College experience to illustrate the four Indiana steps enumerated above.

1. "The team agrees to work on a common goal". In State College, the team agrees to write course content.

In bringing together a group of teachers who will contribute their talents to a pool, it is necessary to have a specific task to be tackled. The task must require the efforts of all members of the team. Instructional development and course content are areas which are of high interest to teachers. Our team of teachers makes decisions about what to put into the yearly instructional content. We choose an annual theme around which the course content revolves. During brain storming sessions we break the year into smaller groupings based on content. Individual teacher and community strengths are unearthed, discovered, or created simply by talking about how, what, and when we will teach.

2. "The team recognizes that each member must learn something about the others' technical background". In State College this step involves teachers teaching each other during work days Allocated to in-service programs.

During the brain storming sessions, content areas are identified which require specific teacher competencies. Members of the team are encouraged to communicate their expertise, both verbally and in writing, in each content area. Teacher awareness of the talents within the team is one outcome of this endeavor. Personality clashes are diminished as the strengths of each teacher are brought to the fore.

In the absence of any individual expertise in a content area, all teachers research specific aspects of the content and present their findings to the team. Discovering the absence of technical knowledge within the team is important and simply means additional resources must be sought to energize the pool.

3. "Each member of the team must actually learn something of the others' respective disciplines". In State College, this means teaching the children what one has learned from colleagues.

In order for the instructional content to be integrated, each teacher must teach all aspects of the course content. It is not enough to let each specialist teach that content area. Personality clashes are greatly reduced when teachers learn and teach what another teacher has taught them. Respect, not jealousy, surfaces as each team members' expertise is put into practice by all members of his/her team. I believe this aspect is vital to ensure the integrated content areas reaching all of the children in the time available.

Teacher expertise grows in all aspects of the instructional content when they are constantly learning from their colleagues. When teachers actually teach children what another team member has

taught them, then they too have grown professionally. In addition, anytime an area of uncertainty arises, an expert or source of knowledge within the team is immediately available. One added advantage in teaching another team members' area of expertise is continual analysis of the instructional content through self-criticism.

4. "The team must successfully complete a series of action steps". In State College, we write the instructional content and teach this content for one teaching year.

Putting the instructional content for one year into action requires the flexibility of the team members in accepting differing roles at different times. At various periods teachers will assume roles as members of the team, and at other times they will be leaders of the team. Telfer(8) describes the differing roles: "members have different functions as do members of a sports team. Each person is selected for a role based on his capabilities to perform such a function". Because each team member is actively involved in the development and selection of instructional content, the degree of difficulty of the problem is anticipated and readily solvable. No teacher can feel under-recognized or overworked due to ignorance of the depth of the problem. That important ingredient of expectancy has been included throughout the entire program.

The two critical questions of how members of the team can contribute to the pool and how they can know what resources are in the pool have been explored. The solution lies in total involvment of pool members from inception of instructional content to

practical teaching experience. The three causes of team teaching failure have been removed: planning is extensive, personality clashes are reduced due to the commonality of position within the team, and integration of material is achieved throughout the program.

Team teaching will work!

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